

IBMP Briefing Statement

Agency: Yellowstone National Park
Issue: Response to GAO Recommendations – Annual Report
Date: December 17, 2008

- The proposed process for coordinating the response to the GAO recommendations is to develop an annual report consisting of 1-page narrative summaries that outline progress on:
 - each management action in the IBMP Management Plan;
 - Yellowstone National Park's surveillance plan for bison; and
 - improvements on vaccines, vaccine delivery systems, and disease testing for brucellosis in bison.
- The report would include some tables and figures that indicate annual trends in key metrics, a matrix table tracking whether or not progress was made on each action/activity each year, and a table of estimated annual bison management expenditures for each agency (similar to the GAO report).
- The 1-page narrative summaries for each management action in the IBMP Management Plan will be provided by the lead agency identified in the plan.
- The summary of other surveillance activities will be provided by the park.
- The summary of any improvements on vaccines, vaccine delivery systems, and disease testing will be provided by Yellowstone National Park and APHIS.
- The information for the tables and figures will be provided by the lead agency identified in the IBMP Management Plan for that particular management action.
- The narratives will summarize information for each of the various monitoring metrics under each management action and any significant management responses taken.
- The Technical Committee will hold quarterly check-ins via email and/or phone to discuss progress and solve problems regarding reporting.
- A proposed outline for the annual report is attached.

ANNUAL REPORT – INTERAGENCY BISON MANAGEMENT PLAN (IBMP)

INTRODUCTION

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

- 1.1.a—Allow untested female/mixed groups of bison to migrate onto and occupy the Horse Butte peninsula and the Flats each winter and spring in Zone 2.
- 1.1.b—Use adaptive management to gain management experience regarding how bison use Zone 2 in the Gardiner basin, and provide space/habitat for bison in cattle-free areas.
- 1.1.c—Use research findings on bison birth synchrony and fetal and shed *Brucella abortus* field viability and persistence to inform adaptive management.
- 1.2.a—Allow bachelor groups of bull bison to occupy suitable habitat areas outside the west boundary of YNP in the portion of Zone 2 south of Duck Creek each year within the parameters of conflict management.
- 1.2.b—Allow bachelor groups of bull bison to occupy suitable habitat areas in Zone 2 outside the north boundary of YNP within the following parameters of conflict management.
- 1.3.a—Work with private land owners and livestock producers and operators to provide conflict-free habitat in the Hebgen and Gardiner basins.
- 1.3.b—Work with landowners who have human safety and property damage concerns, as well as those who favor increased tolerance for bison, to provide conflict-free habitat in the Hebgen and Gardiner basins.
- 1.3.c—Annually, the Gallatin National Forest will ensure conflict-free habitat is available for bison and livestock grazing on public lands, as per management objectives of the IBMP.
- 2.1.a—Increase the understanding of bison population dynamics to inform adaptive management and reduce sharp increases and decreases in bison abundance.
- 2.1.b—Increase the understanding of genetics of Yellowstone bison to inform adaptive management.
- 2.1.c—Increase understanding of the ecological role of bison to inform adaptive management by commissioning a comprehensive review and assessment.
- 2.2.a—Use slaughter only when necessary; attempt to use other risk management tools first.
- 2.2.b—In Zone 2 lands adjacent to YNP, emphasize management of bison as wildlife and increase the use of state and treaty hunts to manage bison numbers and demographic rates, limit the risk of brucellosis transmission to cattle, and protect human safety and property.
- 2.2c—Complete the quarantine feasibility study and consider an operational quarantine facility to provide a source of live, disease-free bison for tribal governments and other requesting organizations.
- 3.1.a—Continue bison vaccination under prevailing authority.
- 3.1.b—Complete EIS processes (MEPA/NEPA) for remote delivery vaccination of bison and use the outcomes to inform adaptive management.
- 3.1.c—Test and vaccinate cattle.
- 3.2.a—Use spatial and temporal separation and hazing to prevent cattle/bison interactions.
- 3.2.b—Evaluate the use of limited, strategically placed fencing when and where it could effectively create separation between domestic livestock and bison, and not create a major movement barrier to other wildlife.
- 3.2.c—Haze bison from the Hebgen basin into YNP with a target date of May 15.
- 3.2.d—Haze bison from the Gardiner basin into YNP with a target date of May 1.

SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES

IMPROVEMENTS IN VACCINES, DELIVERY SYSTEMS, AND DISEASE TESTING

LITERATURE CITED

TABLES AND FIGURES